

Chapter 8

IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION

The SFWMD stresses the importance of a coordinated and cooperative approach to water resource management. To accomplish its mission, the District has integrated its efforts with the federal and state governments, 145 local governments and 68 water control districts within its jurisdiction, and a variety of agencies, organizations, utilities, and private citizens that play a role in water resource management. The District will continue to take the lead role in establishing the framework for regional water resource management within South Florida, while recognizing the authority and responsibilities of other governmental entities and the needs and concerns of other interested and affected parties. The main groups of agencies and organizations with which the SFWMD systematically coordinates its water resource management efforts are discussed below.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The District coordinates all of its federal initiatives with both the State of Florida's Washington D.C. Office and with the Florida congressional delegation. The SFWMD has cooperative efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Interior, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

As local sponsor for the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project, the District has had a long and productive relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The federal government has established an Interagency Task Force on South Florida that is coordinating all federal agencies' interests in the South Florida ecosystem. One of the major work efforts of the task force was the C&SF Project Comprehensive Review Study (Restudy). The task force is currently developing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which will refine and implement the Restudy. District staff will continue to participate on the project team of the CERP and will be involved in formulating its recommendations.

While the CERP may result in new directions in the future, the District and other state and federal agencies will continue to coordinate in reshaping the present water management system in South Florida. The Kissimmee River Restoration, the Everglades Construction Project (ECP), and Modified Deliveries to the Everglades National Park are joint projects that will integrally link the District, state, and federal interests in the restoration of South Florida's natural environment.

U. S. Geological Survey

The U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) conducts and publishes results of geological research and maps related to topography, landforms, and hydrology. The USGS also conducts ground and surface water monitoring within the SFWMD. The District will continue to pursue joint hydrologic studies and outreach efforts with the USGS, as well as to utilize USGS data and expertise in its water resource management efforts.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The SFWMD had coordinated efforts with the NRCS in a variety of soil and water conservation activities.

U.S. Department of the Interior

The SFWMD works cooperatively with the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. These agencies have substantial interest in the management of waters affecting federal properties including Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, and the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Department of Commerce

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an agency of the Department of Commerce, and issues weather forecasts, as well as technical data regarding coastal and other environmental resources. The District will continue to coordinate with NOAA in order to improve flood forecasting throughout South Florida. The District is also engaged with NOAA as part of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Program.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is another federal partner of the SFWMD. The District is working with the USEPA's National Estuary Program in the Indian River Lagoon, and strongly supports national estuary designation for the Caloosahatchee River/Charlotte Harbor system. In light of Clean Water Act reauthorization and the implementation of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Program, the SFWMD will be increasingly active in coordinating with the USEPA with regard to water quality, water supply, and natural systems.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

The SFWMD will continue to coordinate its emergency management efforts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP is a federal program enabling property

owners in participating communities to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding. Participating communities adopt and enforce a floodplain management ordinance to reduce future flood risks to new construction in flood prone areas. The federal government, in return, makes flood insurance available within the community.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The SFWMD will continue to coordinate with many state agencies in order to carry out its mission. The District has developed strong working relationships with the Executive Office of the Governor, the Cabinet, the Florida Legislature, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Department of Community Affairs, the Public Service Commission, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Education.

The Water Planning Coordination Group is composed of representatives from the FDEP and all five water management districts. This group has met since the early 1990s to help guide all parties toward effective implementation of the Florida Water Plan, the District Water Management Plans (DWMPs), and regional water supply plans. Attendees have included representatives from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Governor's Office, Florida Cabinet, and Legislature

The SFWMD will continue its close coordination with the Executive Office of the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Florida Legislature in order to communicate regional needs, maximize funding effectiveness, and coordinate state and regional efforts.

Many land acquisition matters involving the District (e.g., Kissimmee River restoration and restoration of flows to Taylor Slough and Florida Bay) are considered by the Cabinet. Similarly, during every legislative session, key legislation affecting water resources and the water management districts is considered. The state plays a lead role in defining coordination between land use planning and water resource protection, and ensures coordination among the State Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 187, F.S.), the Florida Water Plan, the Florida Transportation Plan, all five DWMPs, and the regional planning councils' strategic regional policy plans. These are the principal plans that guide local land use and land development decision making, transportation system development, water management, and regional policy making.

In 1994, the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida was established to examine the relationship between a healthy Everglades ecosystem and economic growth and development in the region. The Governor's Commission was congressionally recognized as a formal advisory body to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force overseeing the Restudy. A Governing Board member represented the SFWMD on the Governor's Commission until it completed its work in March 1999.

The commission produced 14 reports during its five-year tenure, many of them directly relating to the Restudy.

In June 1999, Governor Jeb Bush signed Executive Order 99-144 creating the Governor's Commission for the Everglades to continue the work started by the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida. The Commission for the Everglades is intended to have a two-year tenure and is intended to serve as an advisory body to the task force.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Statutorily, the District operates under the general supervisory authority and budgetary oversight of the FDEP. Many vital programs including the administration of the CERP, Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plans, the Save Our Rivers (SOR) Program, the Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP) Program, and the DWMP rely on close coordination between the agencies. The state's five water management districts work with the FDEP to update the Florida Water Plan, which addresses four areas of responsibility: water supply, flood protection, water quality, and natural systems. The Executive Office of the Governor and FDEP have also worked with the state's five water management districts to identify core objectives and performance measures within each district's areas of responsibility.

Department of Community Affairs

The SFWMD will continue to work closely with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to ensure that water resources are considered in local planning efforts. The District reviews and comments on local government comprehensive plans for the DCA, and works with the DCA to provide technical assistance to local government planning efforts. The District will also continue to coordinate its emergency management efforts with DCA's Emergency Operations Center and Division of Emergency Management.

Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission is responsible for regulating the rates, services, and safety of several types of investor-owned utilities, including water and wastewater utilities. The SFWMD will continue to coordinate with the Public Service Commission to promote and facilitate reuse of reclaimed water, as well as to promote conservation oriented rate structures for public water supplies.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), through its Office of Water Policy, carries out its commitment to participate in the development of water policy. FDACS communicates the needs of the agricultural industry to the Florida Legislature, the FDEP, and the water management districts, and ensures participation of agriculture in the development and implementation of water policy decisions. FDACS

also oversees Florida's soil and water conservation districts, which coordinate closely with the federal NRCS.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) was previously called the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (FGFWFC). This agency administers hunting and freshwater fishing regulations, in addition to conducting research and educating the public on the value of nongame species. The FWC coordinates with the SFWMD in regards to hunting and fishing regulations on District lands. The SFWMD will continue to develop joint management agreements for SFWMD land with the FWC where appropriate, as well as coordinate related outreach efforts.

Department of Health

The Department of Health has regulatory authority for septic tanks, as well as water quality testing of private wells. This department addresses water resource protection through programs administered by each county health unit. The SFWMD will share water quality monitoring data with the Department of Health, as well as coordinate enforcement efforts of septic tank regulations.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation is responsible for design, construction, and maintenance of the state highway system. The SFWMD will continue to work with the Department of Transportation in the planning of future state road projects, consistent with the District's mission.

Department of Education

The SFWMD will continue coordinated efforts with the Department of Education's Regional Centers for Environmental Education to provide innovative programs to educate Floridians about the unique and complex nature of our environment.

REGIONAL AGENCIES

The SFWMD communicates and confers with the four other water management districts in the State of Florida, as well as with the regional planning councils and the regional water supply authority within SFWMD boundaries.

Water Management Districts

The SFWMD has an expansive working relationship with the other water management districts in the state. Planning initiatives, emergency operations procedures, regulatory issues, communications and educational programs, and financial and administrative activities are all coordinated among the five districts. Development of the

districtwide water supply assessments and the district water management plans are noteworthy examples of this coordination. The annual Florida Water Management Conference is another vehicle for coordination and cooperation among the districts.

In order to ensure coordination between the SFWMD and the adjoining neighboring districts (St. Johns River and Southwest Florida water management districts) all three districts have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU includes provisions on coordination in water shortage declarations and water resource investigation, planning, and regulation. Through the implementation of this MOU, and additional appropriate contacts, the SFWMD will continue to coordinate its efforts with neighboring water management districts.

Regional Planning Councils

The District works closely with the five regional planning councils within its jurisdiction. As a result of legislation recommended by ELMS III (the third statewide Environmental Land Management Study), the water management districts now serve in an ex officio (nonvoting) capacity on the regional planning councils. District involvement with the regional planning councils includes information sharing, assistance with GIS mapping, and participation in jointly funded studies and planning efforts. Through these efforts, the District has and will continue to contribute to the integration of land use and water management.

Regional Water Supply Authorities

The regional water supply authorities are established pursuant to interlocal agreements to provide wholesale water supply. They may acquire water and water rights; develop, store, and transport water; and provide, sell, and deliver water for county or municipal uses. The composition of the authority's governing body is specified in the interlocal agreement. Lee County Regional Water Supply Authority is the only agency of this type presently operating within SFWMD boundaries. Others agencies within the District are termed authorities, but they are really special districts.

Sanitary and Water Supply Districts

Sanitary and water supply districts were established by special act to provide water supply, sewerage, or solid waste disposal facilities. Within the SFWMD, these are the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, Immokalee Water and Sewer District, Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District, and the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County. The SFWMD will continue to coordinate water resource related efforts with these special districts, as appropriate.

Water Control Districts

The SFWMD contains water control districts which provide local drainage. The water control district canals are considered part of the secondary drainage system, and typically drain into the District controlled, primary canal system. Most of these districts

were created pursuant to Chapter 298, F.S. These are known as the 298 Districts. The 298 Districts frequently take in water from developments' tertiary drainage systems, or from areas used for agriculture. Effective communication between the managers of the three levels of drainage facilities (primary, secondary, and tertiary) is essential in order to maximize the capability of South Florida's water resource management efforts. The SFWMD will continue to facilitate communication between these three levels in order to maximize the flood protection capability of the combined systems.

The SFWMD will also explore options for stormwater retrofit projects with the 298 Districts, as well as develop agreements to assist in implementing flowway projects, preserving wetlands, and restoring natural water fluctuations, where possible.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Since 1986, the SFWMD has had an active program of outreach and assistance to local governments. Because local land use decisions and utility operations impact water resources, improving lines of communication and keeping local interests apprised of District policies and programs are critical to the success of regional water management. Similarly, operation of the C&SF Project and other District programs and activities can directly affect local communities. The responsibility rests with the SFWMD to constantly improve its relationship with, and responsiveness to, its local partners.

SFWMD local government assistance representatives are assigned to work with individual counties or groups of counties, and to coordinate District resources with municipal and local interests. These representatives facilitate interaction on a variety of matters including regulatory issues, local water resource planning efforts, technical and financial assistance for storm water management and planning, water supply development, resource protection, and recreational projects.

A key responsibility of the District with respect to local governments is the review of water resource related elements of local comprehensive plans and plan amendments. Designated a review agency in the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act of 1985 (Section 163.3184, F.S.), the SFWMD focuses on ensuring that local planning actions consider potential impacts on water resources. Data and information from local comprehensive plans are utilized in District planning efforts. The SFWMD also assists in the preparation of local government plans by providing technical assistance and information regarding the status of water resources throughout the region.

The SFWMD also works with local governments on the development and adoption of local ordinances designed to protect local resources and wetlands. Wellfield protection ordinances, water conservation ordinances, model landscape codes, and model rate structures are examples of products which the District has developed to aid in local decision making and resource management.

SOVEREIGN NATIONS

Native American communities within the jurisdiction of the SFWMD include the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. The District and the Seminole Tribe of Florida have a cooperative relationship in the Seminole Compact, which is a complex accord that affirms both the tribe's and the state's water rights. Negotiations on a water rights compact between the District and the Miccosukee Tribe were suspended several years ago pending settlement of litigation. Annual meetings between the two resumed in June 1999, and it is hoped that an agreement similar to the compact with the Seminole Tribe can be achieved in the future.

Beyond formal agreements, the District interacts with the sovereign Native American nations on a variety of issues including access to rights-of-way and land management concerns; water quality issues including the *Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan Update* (SFWMD, 1997b) and Everglades restoration; drainage and flooding matters; and oil exploration in the Everglades. The District will continue to coordinate efforts, and pursue appropriate cooperative relationships with the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes in order to serve their needs in the most effective manner possible.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The SFWMD will continue to seek the involvement of the public in its activities on a regular basis. In doing so, the District endeavors to go beyond the minimum requirements of law to keep the public informed and involved in its decisionmaking processes. Public involvement will continue to occur on a monthly basis at the workshops and regular meetings of the SFWMD's Governing Board. Members of the public frequently participate in discussions during presentations and during the public comment periods. Comments range from concerns about site specific water resource issues to broad policy issues.

In addition to the Governing Board's monthly meetings, the District will continue to provide numerous venues to solicit public input. The methods used are often issue driven, diverse, and tailored to the needs of the interested public, including the following:

- Annual series of budget workshops
- Informational workshops
- Public meetings
- Speaker's bureau
- Informational brochures
- Notices of meetings/hearings sent to general and special purpose mailing lists
- Special public relations campaigns in both print and electronic media
- Web site

MEDIA

Largely through the media, the residents of South Florida are able to keep abreast of SFWMD projects and initiatives. As a result, the District must work closely with the various categories of the media to ensure accurate coverage and to make sure that the District's message is clear. The District will continue to provide the media with appropriate information in a timely manner, schedule tours to familiarize reporters with District activities, and highlight important activities carried out by the District.

ADVISORY GROUPS

The SFWMD encourages intense levels of participation with regard to some activities. For the past eight years, the District has been active in seeking the input of regional interests in the development of regional water supply plans. Water supply plan advisory committees are made up of local, state, and federal officials; agricultural, environmental, and urban interests; and water resource professionals. Advisory committees have been established for the water supply planning efforts for all four planning regions (the Lower East Coast, the Lower West Coast, the Upper East Coast, and the Kissimmee Basin).

Until April 2000, the SFWMD had District established advisory committees for agriculture, utilities, and the environment. District staff utilized input from these interested and affected party advisory committees to provide broad-based interest group recommendations on its water resource management programs. However, as District constituted advisory bodies, these committees and their members were subject to the strict requirements of the Florida Sunshine, Public Records, and Ethics laws, which was increasingly creating conflict issues for committee members during their normal course of non-District business. Therefore, in April 2000, these committees were decommissioned as advisory committees of the District, but the interests formerly represented on these committees were encouraged in that Governing Board action to create their own independent committee frameworks if they still desired to communicate future concerns to the District.

The District Governing Board initially created an outside independent Budget and Finance Advisory Commission in May 1995. The commission is composed of nine individuals from both the private and public sectors, each appointed by a current board member. The commission reports directly to the Governing Board on budget development and long-term financial planning issues.

These advisory groups will continue to be a valuable channel of communication between the District and the community it serves. The input provided by these groups will facilitate the development, refinement, and implementation of District initiatives.

WATER SUPPLY AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

The SFWMD works closely with both public and private utilities through regulatory and planning activities. The SFWMD also cooperates with utilities in the development of comprehensive water conservation and demand management programs to reduce water withdrawals. The District also promotes and encourages increased wastewater reclamation and reuse throughout South Florida.

PRIVATE LAND TRUSTS

Private land trusts within the SFWMD perform a variety of tasks. The general goal shared by all is to preserve environmentally-sensitive lands either through acquisition, conservation easements, or in lieu fee programs. Private land trusts that operate within the SFWMD include the Trust For Public Land, Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Land Trust Alliance, Green Horizon Land Trust, and Florida Land Trust Group. These entities assist the District in land acquisition by providing assistance in the negotiations, land management, development of public use programs, and environmental education. Private land trusts may prefer to form partnerships to achieve their goals. Private land trusts typically specialize in one or two of these components to achieve the common vision of preserving environmentally sensitive lands. The SFWMD will continue to coordinate with private land trusts in order to preserve environmentally sensitive lands.